CHAOS AND CREATIVITY OF PLAY:
DESIGNING EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SPACES

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ABSTRACT

How do we create strong urban narratives? How do we create affection for our cities? Play, an essential part of any species' biological existence and development, can often be perceived as chaotic and derogatory to social and spatial order. Play is also often perceived as a creative force which generates social and spatial value. This paper looks at the design approaches to both chaotic and creative perceptions of publics at play in urban space. Commonly, Urban and Architectural Design constitutes reactive management of perceived chaos, which derogatorily effects our sensory and emotional engagement with space. Alternatively, Urban and Architectural Design can appeal to the creativity of play, by encouraging unsolicited novelty that is vital to strong experiential narratives in the city and iterating environments that encourage the emergence of physical, emotional and cultural invention.

These perceptions of chaos and creativity affect the design methodology of professional practice. Tested through the exciting vehicle of Parkour as urban narrative, the constraints and opportunities of both approaches are presented.

Keywords: Play, Parkour, Urban, Architecture,

INTRODUCTION

The emotional response to an urban environment is mediated through the sensual experience of the context. Emotions can be considered the intersection between the bodily experience of a space and the cultural understanding of a space (Karp, Stone, & Yoels, 1991). This experience depends in large part upon the interaction of a subject with a context; this interaction involves a physical activity as well as a cultural mediation. Cities present complex contexts, filled with multiple publics of different values, interests and futures (Iveson 2007). Although we commonly believe that cities used to be complex environments providing different stimuli at multiple levels (Benevolo, 1993); both the physical and theoretical inheritance of contemporary urban and architectural designers has been sanitized by those before us leaving a legacy of failed utopias seeking to provide decor to the civic stage, segregated activities and imposing a selective experience on city users (Zardini et al., 2005) based upon vision horizons shared only by select citizenry (Iveson, 2007). The conception of public spaces consisting of one ideal public actor has generated an oversimplified sensual experience of the environment erasing those peculiar sensory characteristics such as sound, smell and also bodily experience of space (Zardini, et al., 2005), vital for emotional sensory narrative. Sensorial backgrounds are flattened to stereotyped features, such as traffic jams noise, pollution odours, globalised soundtracks or standardised tastes (Arefi, 2004). Where vision has become the main sense urban spaces accommodate; perspectives and diagonal views are set to gratify a predetermined use of space reserving predetermined areas for some functions and isolating others (Theodore, 2006).

Though this sanitation of the environment and isolation of novel spatial programmes reduced the emotional narrative affordances of the city, it enabled the rationalization of uses and redistribution of functions (Karp, et al., 1991) and the concept of leisure emerged as a separable unit of the urban narrative of experience, attracting specialist attention,

able to be moved entirely from the public to the private, and able to be rationalised and codified in new ways.

Figure 1. Brughel: 1560. Kinderspielen. Kunsthistorisches Museum: Vienna. Depicts children and adults at play in the urban environment.

The way in which the dominant horizon vision perceives play has affected weather the possible ludic affordances of the public sphere have been realised. In Protestant countries the idea of play has always been associated with youth and the general assumption was that adults had to be focused on decorous activities (Karp, et al., 1991) as a result of the dominant cultural horizon visioning of the city. In other geographical areas, for example Catholic Europe, playing in the city has been seen as a creative positive force rather than a chaotic transgression (Mulryne, Watanabe-O'kelly, & Shewring, 2004); adults have been playing for centuries in eccentric games, such as running with bulls in Pamplona; human scale chess games in Marostica, and mock wars to remember historical episodes of the cities narrative. This kind of playful engagement with context marks the identity of a city, its character imbued in the emotional and sensual experience of the context (Benevolo, 1980).
The sanitization of the city, redistributing functions in specific areas or complexes, has segregated the idea of leisure in specific compounds and transplanted sports to the edge of the consolidated cities, reserving centres for activities considered more decorous (Karp, et al., 1991).

Play is a fundamental human activity at every age; it transmits and mediates socio-cultural values and teaches the body how to relate to the context and to other urban actors whose scripts may diverge from the norm. In adults as well as in children, play still has a fundamental recreational, social and cultural purpose (Huizinga, 1955).

This paper argues that urban play enhances the emotional narrative of the city as unsolicited novelty and non-normative affordance. After considering what play is and how it can be perceived as deviant and chaotic, and how it can be perceived as desirous and creative, the paper then explores common design responses to these two perceptions of play and identifies the resultant effects that these responses have on our emotional engagement with city narratives. To further demonstrate these design responses, the paper narrates the urban play experience of Parkour.

ABOUT PLAY

Play in the city is highly justified, desirous and critical to a successful urban society. Play has empirical medical benefit to the body (Groos 1896) and to the mind (Eastman 1997, O'Brien 1994). Play activities are important in cultures throughout the world and throughout history, as recently recognised by the United Nations Conventions on The Rights of the Child (Article 31, UNICEF: *full text of the convention*), as well as by the World Health Organisation (WHO 2010). Urban Play is tied to place, the context of the urban environment, represented as an important integrated part of a city's culture and society.

Play, should be an integrated part of our lives, spatially and culturally. Plato wrote around 300BCE that *"We should live out our lives playing at certain pastimes"* (Plato in Burgess 1854. Book 7, paragraph 803e) often simplified to *"Life must be Lived as Play".* Dutch Kinderspellen (child's play) tradition in paintings from the 16th Century depicts adults and children using their immediate urban environment as a playground. Examples of this can be seen in the works of Hendrick Avercamp and Pieter Brueghel the Elder (Fig 1).

More recently, Guy Deboard (1958) and the Situationist movement proposed that cities should consider programmes of psycho-geographic flow as much as utilitarian function, away from *'stiflingly conventional bourgeois urban life, of consumer culture and the world of work'* (Doll and Lefaivre 2007). They

practiced this philosophy by engaging in playful wanderings or 'derives' in the 1950's throughout urban France and the mapping of spaces (such as in 'The Naked City') with respect to their ludic and experiential content and potentiality. Constant Nieuwenhuys – associated with the situationists - designed 'New Babylon' between the late 50's and early 70's, a theoretical redevelopment of Paris into an urban geo-spatial infrastructure which would support a new 'Ludenic Age' or 'age of play' (Leorke, 2008). Play here, as in the work of the situationists, was purposefully anti-consumerist, a counter-culture expression of self in the context of society and space.

Play has the ability to change the way we imagine the city. Where normative behaviour can reinforce erroneous visioning of banal spatial narratives based on conceptions of shared motives and shared interest which are less present in complex modern cities (Iveson 2007), Play changes the perspective and perception of the player. When the cultural consumer plays, they can become cultural creators and cultural hackers. When known affordances are played with, they reveal unknown affordances. When users play, they become mis-users. When citizens play, they can become deviants. Encouraging urban actors to engage with the strangeness of others (Iveson 2007), players are estranged from their own familiar surroundings by the ritual and phantasies of play (Afosky; 1992).

Play can be perceived as both chaotic and creative and these two perceptions solicit very different responses from the design professions. Play as chaos treats play as a problem to be solved, seeking to remove, mitigate and mediate risk and any perceived threat to normative programs and their associated decor. Perceiving play as positive creativity is approached with approaches which encourage sensory and emotional engagement. Both approaches have their detractions and their benefits.

VIEWING PLAY AS CHAOS TO BE SOLVED

Play activities can be seen as chaotic, where the realities and predictability of events are suspended periodically and new rules and methods of interaction take precedence (Huizinga, 1955) creating a space where compared to normative affordances and actions, things are out of control. Often these non-normative methods of social and spatial interaction can cause conflict between the scripts of normative and non-normative urban actors. One of the first documented examples of play creating conflict within the city is when ball games (akin to Shrovetide football) were banned within the London city limits by Nicholas de Farndone in 1314 (Gerhardt n.d.):

"[f]orasmuch as there is great noise in the city caused by hustling over large foot balls [rageries de grosses pelotes de pee] in the fields of the public from which many evils might arise which God forbid: we command and forbid on behalf of the king, on pain of imprisonment, such game to be used in the city in the future."

Figure 2. Shrovetide Football Match lithograph. Artist unknown.

In this example; noise, movement and pleasure are all listed as indicting characteristics which, although emotionally immersive, are seen as chaotic and less than decorous and incur a negative response. When a cosmopolitan heterotopic perception of the city is taken which considers the shared futures of all urban publics, then there may be some discussion about the reasonableness of the activity and its effects on others futures (Young in Iveson: 2007 location 725). However, where the perception of public space and horizon visions stems from the shared goals or values of a single public, then the perception of chaotic play creating conflict requires the mediation, mitigation or removal of the 'anti-social' activity (Iveson, 2007 location 3085).

Designing in response to play as chaos to be removed often consists of banal responses to complex urban conflicts that are centred on spatial segregation and expurgation (Borden, 2001) and enjoys the familiarity of many established precedents and so often presents the most attractive approach to consideration of play in the built environment. Here, play is affected by the design process through adversarial consideration, where the activity itself, or elements of it, must be changed and/or manipulated till the problem no longer exists. Part of a larger Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategy; sensorial manipulation, disruption and denial can form part of this approach.

Auditory, visual and tactile disruption technologies are widely available to designers and space managers. "The Mosquito" is one such technology which emits high frequency white noise which only affects the young and more sensitive inner ear of youth and young adult populations can perceive (MosquitoSSS, n.d.). The white noise causes discomfort and is designed to remove the target population from these spaces. The mosquito has been in popular use in the US and UK by many retailers and schools for the prevention of loitering. Although at this point not explicitly in breach of the human rights legislation (Hewitsons, 2006), the mosquito, and similar devices such as the "Con-tech Scarecrow" which automatically sprays water on people detected by motion sensor, contribute to what Soja (2010) refers to as spatial inequality. Similar tools of sensory disruption include 'anti-skate' devices and the purposeful design of urban infrastructure (like park benches) to be uncomfortable, to prevent further loitering and the use of public space by homeless persons. Not only do these devices affect the emotional experience of space through sensory disruption, but they also actively segregate public space and those public thresholds on or within private spaces (Carmona et al 2003) that form cohesive and networked urban spatial identities. The effect of these devices is the social and cultural segregation of space, the creation of banal homogenous cultural terrains, and the emotional disturbance of people's connection with place.

Beyond the use of technologies that remove the scripts and actors who are perceived to be offensive, the design of cities can also disrupt emotional and sensory connection between people, place and experience and is evidenced in the spaces modern designers have inherited since the industrial revolution. An increase in mobility through technological developments meant the decentralisation of urban form generally, and the isolation and separation of specific urban programmes connected by high speed transit systems (Knox and Pinch, 2000). Play spaces, like residences and workplaces, became segregated and removed from the larger urban context and began to attract specialist attention in architecture and planning (Carmona et al. 2003). As far back as the C18th, specialist play spaces began to arise like the Russian Katalanya Gorka Pavillion (Buccaro, Kjucarianc and Miltenov, 2003) which saw concentrated ludic activity beginning to centre on specific cultural and commercial space. The Russian precedent persists in theme parks, malls, skate rinks and other leisure facilities which require 'consumer citizenship' in order to secure access to play (Aalst Melik and Weesop, 2007, Voyce 2006). The emotions of appropriation, inventive play and connection with place and space are replaced with commercially regulated play forms and the intimate sensory experience is standardised, commercialised and marketed, and the original non-regulated play activities are treated as a threat to the economic viability of the private space.

Designing for play as chaos and risk to be mitigated is also a common response in cities that evidence litigious culture. Risks present themselves in many ways but can most commonly be represented as risks to the people, risks to property and risks to quality of life (sometimes mistaken for the dominant horizon vision) (Iveson; 2008). Often the mitigation methods either require the manipulation of the physical space or the segregation of activity all together through legal or corporate mechanisms. Yet risk often heightens our sensory and emotional experience of space. By engagement with risk comes a heightened awareness of physical and social context in order to better navigate the challenging environment (CABE 2008), and without risk of failure then sensory and emotional narratives of success cannot occur (Angel: 2007).

Further to this there is no way that risk can be completely divorced from public existence.

Sometimes under approaches which see play as chaos to be mitigated, the activity of play is permitted, but the armatures which support it are manipulated in control of their height, materiality and shape. Some of these approaches are legitimately required to prevent creating urban spaces in which the safety and health of urban actors is constantly at risk, but often these material changes are made to the detriment of the playing public and in deference to the normative affordances of the governing body instead of encouraging the creative and innovative interpretation of the public sphere. In other instances, the armatures of play and the freedoms to play are removed from space, such as the removal of trees and swings from parks, and the erection of signs banning certain activities in an area such as ball games, wading or skateboarding.
Often built environment professionals will raise the subject of risk as an initial obstacle to the consideration of play in urban space, however recent studies and precedents demonstrate that the mitigation of risk should be balanced against the need to design attractive places which creatively engage the public by focussing on being risk aware, but not risk averse (CABE 2007, 2008 and Mayor of London 2008). This approach encourages the risks to people, property and publics such as crime and health and safety such as crime, surveillance and legibility of space to be dealt with using established methods of lighting, way-finding, etc, but that these considerations do not necessarily require the creative and playable design of spaces to be normalised (CABE 2007).

Lastly, Design for play as chaotic conflict to be mediated has begun to find more popularity by contemporary urban professionals. Here chaos is the milieu of complex, overlapping and unsolicited novelties which are beyond the programmatic control of the designer or manager of space, but which can be encouraged to adopt flows and tactics which avoid conflict (Pile in Iveson 2008 location 607), allowing a more cosmopolitan existence of multiple complex and competing scripts of urban actors. A space may be designed to accommodate both peak hour pedestrian traffic and the proximate positioning of street buskers and beggars without one activity demanding the expurgation of the other, and allowing the pedestrians to benefit from entertainment, and the busker to benefit from patronage. Such an approach further allows many other unknown affordances to be realised by urban actors following non-normative scripts. Some designers of skate specific facilities have begun instead to design ‘skate-able’ recreation spaces (Theodore; 2008) in an attempt to avoid the segregating labelling rhetoric of more banal urban strategies and encourage the cosmopolitan sensory and emotional experience of the city, recognising that the skater benefits from interaction with other publics, and vice versa. Further to this ‘blurring of spatial definitions’, the removal of socio-spatial labelling helps through mediating those stigmas and perceptions of play as deviancy (FSU; n.d.) where no reasonable risk of public harm is evident. Categorising spaces as play-able, without programming strict play forms, obfuscates territorial boundaries and reinforces creative play behaviours. As a last resort, spatial management can be used to temporarily move players on, or better yet establish controlled active play programmes during risk sensitive periods in which people or property are threatened. This keeps spaces active whilst controlling the level of risk and without permanently territorializing space.

Figure 3. (Rist, P in Demarmels, T. 2008). Stadtlounge in St Gallen Unconventional treatment of familiar objects obfuscates territories and normative affordances and encourages creative reinterpretation of the built context. [image used under creative commons license]

An example of successful spatial mediation is the Sounding Brighton project which saw alleys proximate clubs refurbished with relaxed music. The acoustic refurbishment added a creative and enjoyable sensory

stimulus which encouraged less aggressive behaviour (Bannister, 2012), obfuscating territories of performance and aggression.

By varying degrees, design responses to play perceived as chaos disrupt and limit the creative and sensory potential of space. By far the “play as perceived chaos” approach most inclined to creative outcomes occurs when design acts as a mediator between different urban scripts and provides multiple simultaneous affordances which cater for both the normative and non-normative needs of the public.

PERCEIVING PLAY AS CREATIVE FORCE TO BE ENCOURAGED

Play activities can also be seen as incredibly creative and of immeasurable benefit to the cultural, sensory and emotional generation of city narratives. We have to play in our cities, and doing so adds greatly to our quality of life.

Play’s inherent creativity, requires the participation of the individual’s imagination to make play work. Play requires the brain to navigate imagined and metaphysical barriers, as well as real physical ones. Play requires participants to develop new meanings for and connection between objects (Vygotsky 1978). Google uses play infrastructure in its work spaces to encourage thinking outside of the box and to generate new esoteric ideas, and play creates safe spaces where risks can be taken and ideas and actions tested (Brown, 2008). These imagined spaces are complex territories where both dominant publics and subaltern counter-publics cross-fertilize (Shane 2005), contributing to highly creative and productive social environment.

To avoid segregating one age group from another, playful spaces should provide for affordances of appropriate risk for people of multiple ages and physical abilities (Mayor of London; 2008). Without such considered multiplicity of affordances, conflicts between actors are easily generated, and spatial programming becomes normalised. To assist in providing multiple creative affordances, new methods of urban imagining and horizon visioning are required which considers the deference to the player as important for the creation of a successful emotional and sensory urban narrative. This requires re-consideration of the motives and methods of spatial procurement, reconsideration of the use of established urban tools, signifiers and markers, and re-consideration of the ‘expected normative programmes’ which those considering the procuring and managing of urban space might be accustomed. By playing (hacking) with the perception of normative urban signifiers, it is possible to encourage unsolicited novel interpretations of space and objects. By creating oblique spaces to the normative perpendicular spaces we are accustomed to, new affordances are more easily realised without carrying the burden of cultural labelling and perceptions of deviance (FSU, n.d.) associated with misuse of familiar objects.

Creative play is successful in spaces which allow

Figure 4 (VisitOSLO: 2008) and Figure 5 (MGSpiller; 2008). Oslo Opera House by Snøhetta Architects obfuscates the boundary between corporate and public space by articulating a trafficable roof into an ever-shifting boundary of water, and through the provision of additional services, provides many new affordance able to be realized through creative interpretation of place. [images used under creative commons licence].

multiple affordances of objects, signifiers and spaces, (Lynch 1884) and overt reliance on established urban signifiers often serves to sanitise and stigmatise the opportunity for creative playful invention (FSU; n.d, Lynch; 1984). Oblique and uncertain spaces also reduce risk by encouraging greater spatial perception and interpretation (CABE 2008, p41) because the realisation of unknown affordances enhances sensory perception. By allowing the imagination to assert itself in relation to both familiar and novel urban apparatus, the public is encouraged to appreciate and play with their surroundings (Lynch, 1984). London's Supplementary Planning Guideline (Mayor of London 2008) encourages the informal recreation of youth by not relying on just the normative commercially available play infrastructures, but by exploiting the ludic potential of varied and undulating landscapes in what they refer to as 'playable space'. Many un-programmed objects such as fallen trees, and changes in form and material such as changing vertical surfaces can be used to encourage imaginative re-interpretation of space. Similarly, by obfuscating signifiers spaces can be un-programmed, such as Stadtlounge in Switzerland by Carlos Martinez and Pipilotti Rist (Fig2) where road, sidewalk, chairs, cars and lounges are all covered by the same surface. Children jumping on the carpeted vehicles demonstrate how successful encouraging the playful reinterpretation of the objects meaning and affordance has been (Hauser&Wirth, 2012).

The obfuscation of signifiers can easily be extended to the obfuscation of boundaries, allowing the intensity of the play to determine the temporal territory it occupies and removing barriers between play and the context of the city. Removing barriers where appropriate, providing multiple paths through space and employing contextual materials and construction methods to prevent the sensory expurgation of play from the larger urban narrative.

Spaces also need to be designed fit for public misuse if reinterpretation of affordance is expected. A realistic expectation of ludic utility may require changes to standard material specifications. Materials and finishes, including frameless glass (appropriately laminated and toughened) and vegetation can be used to discourage playful affordance because a spatially aware player perceives risk to themself and to property. Other materials such as timber boarding, sandpits, grass surfaces, seating and other essential infrastructures can be designed fit for appropriation, articulated in such a way that they can wear the passage of time, use and abuse such that character is developed and not compromised. Strong sensory and emotional narratives are often built over extended periods of time and out of use, and as Brand (1995) writes, often the spaces we love the most are also the most resilient and useable. In this respect, the creation of sensory urban narratives through play occurs through an evolutionary paradigm (Marshall, 2009), as the players engage with space. Older cities largely retained their traditional urban images borne from gradual emergence of form and space successfully co-locating many programmes (including play) simultaneously (Gehl 1980, Carmona et al. 2003). Exciting new spatial possibilities are possible when programmes and non-programmes are overlaid in all of their complexity and allowed to ebb and flow in intensity. Banal spaces can become complex spaces with many different legitimate temporal scripts and programmes, so long as they can withstand the ravages of time and creative misuse.

HOW PLAY PERCEIVES THE CITY: A PARKOUR CASE STUDY

New forms of playful sensory engagement are constantly invented as people's imaginations reinterpret their context. By examining new and emerging play forms it is possible to gain insights into players perceive the city, and how the city perceives play and responds to it. One of these emerging play activities is Parkour, an intrinsically urban accessible play form which sees the player (Traceur) move through built normative environments in creative ways which achieve flow, efficiency and beauty. Mechanically the movements are often no more than contextual calisthenics borrowing from gymnastics, martial arts and Herbertism, yet its playful and creative reinterpretation of space has given it a life of its own.

Parkour play perceives the city through heightened emotional and sensory narratives (Angel: 2007). Emotionally, parkour has been likened to the Situationist Internationale’s flaneur and derive

(Gough, M: 2007; Brown, N: 2009) and as a 'counter culture' (Day, 2003) challenging the 'commodification of space and time' (Brown, N: 2009). This is largely due to its creative re-interpretation of objects and its realisation of hidden affordances which are evident in all play forms.

Due to cultural or historic contexts, surface descriptions of *play* activities may differ greatly (such as the difference between descriptions of *play* elements in C15th warfare, a game of bocce and *Parkour*) but they share an underlying conceptual construct. Huizinga (1955) provides a construct for ludic activities that is applicable to many cultural and historical *play* forms. *Play* activities are dependent upon the context and environment in which they occur (frames), and also require a changing stimulus (such as a ball, the weather, social conditions or activity). For *Parkour* and other physical urban *play* activities, architecture is a fundamental contributor to the creation of these frames. Likewise, Asofsky (1992) identifies similar relationships between architecture and activity in his dissertation “Ritual in Architecture”. Asofsky (1992) suggests that the *play*ful ritual function of architecture lies in delineating the frame through which an activity occurs. Asofsky quotes from Bernard Tschumi's “Architecture and Limits III” (1981) in describing this relationship:

”Bodies not only move in, but generate space produced by and through their movements. Movements of dance, sport, war are the intrusions of events into architectural spaces. At the limit, these events become scenarios or program, void of moral or functional implications, independent but inseparable from the spaces that enclose them.” (Tschumi in Asofsky 1992, p4)

Asofsky uses the frames and activities of sports to describe the creative perception of affordances which exemplify this relationship:

“Whereas these lines do control the activity of the game, of the ritual [play], and likewise limit the movements, they do not instruct. That is left to the ingenuity and imagination of the players.” (Asofsky 1992, p15)

Tschumi's definition allows affordance to be perceived by play activities which link potentialities between objects, filling the gaps through activity and the insertion of the body, event or object (Day: 2003, Lamb: 2003). Play activities, although often very different in the description of their activities, share a common conceptual construct in how they perceive the city’s affordances. This creative perception creates new meanings and memories for normative elements and increased sensory and emotional awareness of the city.

Figure 6. (NFG; n.d.).Puppeteer in the City. [image used with permission].

The frames which parkour uses to contextualise itself are often comprised of boundary elements of architectural design. Horizontal boundaries such as walls and railings vertical boundaries such as roofs and changes in level often serve to demarcate a separation of spatial programme, containing and curtailing the movements of the public. Parkour deliberately uses these obstacles as opportunities for expression and asserting ownership across spatial boundaries and generating emotional experiences of empowerment and unfettered spatial equality. This disregard for cultural conventions of spatial segregation suggests a return to more heterotopic co-location of programme within space.

This co-location of urban scripts then raises the concern of conflict by the intrusion of one group upon another’s territory. Traceurs have shown a tendency to avoid conflict (Sane: 2009; Tigger: 2010) through tactics inherent to parkour (Pile in Iveson: 2007) rather than occupy a site for extended periods of time and thus avoid protracted conflict. Traceurs are able to

move on swiftly because of their appreciation of flow and their very disregard for boundaries. Although not all urban players have the ability of Traceurs to transgress boundaries with the same grace and ease, it is evident that completely static, impassable boundaries inhibit the co-location of programme. By providing less explicit boundaries, and opportunities to overcome those boundaries that are deemed absolutely necessary, the opportunity for micro-scale temporal adjustment of activity intensities is enhanced and the potential for protracted conflict is reduced greatly such that the same space can accommodate normative and non-normative programmes easily.

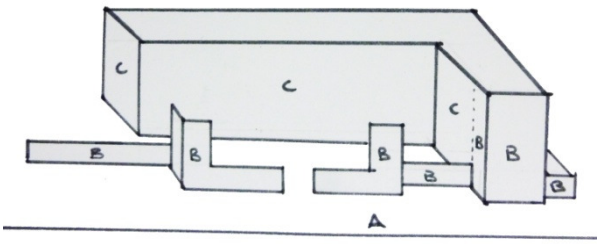

Figure 7: "A" denotes normative conceptions of public space suitable for interaction. "B" denotes surfaces framing public space which parkour interacts with (which may or may not be on or within a private property boundary). "C" denotes urban framing elements which Carmona et al (2003) conceive of as public space. Image by the author

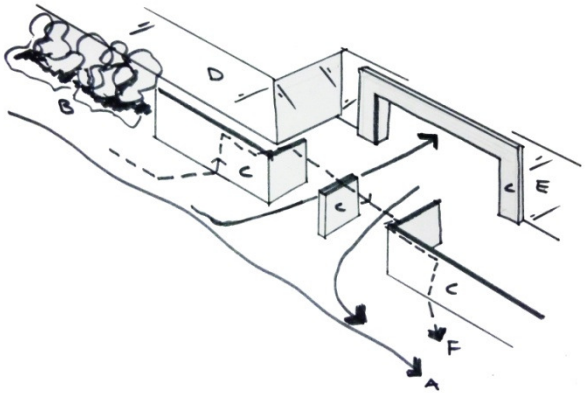

Figure 8: "A" denotes normative interaction path. "B" denotes natural sacrificial layers that are easily regenerated. "C" denotes artificial sacrificial layers. "D" denotes 'sensitive' finishes. "F" denotes off peak ludic interaction paths. Note also the use of adjacent and perpendicular axis relevant during different periods of intensity. Image by the Author

Parkour's emotional connection with place comes as a result of both the sensually intimate nature of Parkour activity and the use of a conceptual frame highly integrated with the urban context.

Chau Belle-Dinh, an early Traceur, struggles to describe the connection between an emotional sensory experience between the body and the space:

"[You] need to see things. It's only a state of mind. It's when you trust yourself, earn an energy. A better knowledge of your body. Be able to move, to overcome obstacles, in real world, or in virtual world, thing of life. Everything that touch you in the head, everything that touch you in your heart. Everything touching you physically. That's it!" (Belle-Dinh: in Christie, M. 2003)

Traceurs know by sight the very touch, smell, strength and grip of surfaces which they encounter on a regular basis. They know how the surface will feel and respond to the weight of their bodies when wet, when dry and when approached from different angles. Not only does this evidence a greater awareness of risk and space, this level of intimacy can result in what can only be described as love for a place: *"This [wall] is my baby...if a brick falls of[f] I'll be devastated"* (Sticky quoted in Angel: 2007). These affectionate emotions expressed toward the surfaces, forms and frame is forwarded seamlessly to the narrative of the larger city when the context of these sensually experiences are integrated into the wider urban fabric. *"I'll never see the city the same way again. I love it".* (Novice Traceur's comment to the Author)

In contrast to this emotional attraction to the urban environment integrated with play frames, Traceurs sense a sensual distancing from the city, when Lappset, a modular playground manufacturer based in Finland, provided 'Australia's first public Parkour Park' (Logan City Council, 2011) in Logan City. The Australian Parkour Association (APA) sent an open letter to council expressing concern for the precedence that the project had begun in which they requested the future engagement of 'community members', the use of 'site specific design' which responds to context, and environmentally responsive 'textural variety' (Machejefski 2011) in urban play projects. Fearing that the opportunity to re-interpret everyday surroundings would be trivialised, and that cultural boundaries (which are harder to surmount than physical ones) would encourage the isolation of parkour activities to specialist space, the APA's

concerns related back to a desire for integrated and sensually intimate experience generating strong emotional ties to people and place.

It is evident that by designing play-able frames contextually integrated into the normative built fabric of the city which encourage and accommodate the discovery of creative new affordances can benefit the sensual and emotional connection the city considerably.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Consistently, through academic investigation and case study exploration, a variety of design principles present themselves as feasible and attractive solutions for increasing positive emotional experiences in public space.

Even when the city perceives play as chaos, steps can be taken to encourage it. When it comes to mitigating risk, approaches which are 'risk aware' and not 'risk averse' should be considering, deferring to the needs of the playing, working and pedestrian public of the city who is most engaged with the urban narrative. Where conflict is anticipated, multiple affordances through the articulation and deployment of designs can mediate potential conflicts and ease the flow of publics through contested urban spaces. Where can conflict persists, pro-active temporal spatial scripting and the insertion of positive alternative spatial programmes can maintain the level of sensory engagement with space and only temporally relocates conflicting programmes that would be acceptable under different circumstances. By removing segregating place identifiers, conflict caused by misplaced perceptions of deviancy can be reduced.

Where the city perceives play as creativity to be encouraged, the obfuscation and manipulation of signifiers, boundaries and normalised affordances can encourage the creation of unsolicited novel affordances which heighten sensory and emotional engagement with the city narrative. By purposefully overlaying multiple programmes (similar to Ginsburg's Social Condenser theory of the 1920's) heterotopic and cosmopolitan complexity can further encourage the playful and creative engagement with space, adding layers of differing social and cultural affordances whilst also encouraging a playful culture to emerge over time as publics negotiate their space and each other. By integrating 'play-able space' indistinct to the wider built context of the city encourages the localised sensory experiences and emotions to be contextualised. The participants, their activities and experiences become tied to places free of requirement for consumer or cultural citizenship, increasing the equity of the city and triggering emotions of empowerment, community, and stewardship.

CONCLUSIONS

Through academic enquiry, possible perceptions of play are categorized, and how those perceptions affect the design of city spaces can be determined. Through observing play behaviours, the effects of those designs on play can be determined, and insights into the reciprocating perception play has of the city is revealed. It is evident that to increase the level of sensory and emotional engagement with the city; the professional practices of designers, managers and procurers of space can be changed. The result of changed professional practices would result in heightened sensual participation with the urban fabric and positive emotional connection with place.

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